



भगवत् गीता  
द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - सांख्य योगः  
**Chapter 2**  
**Volume 6**

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Sri Krishna has been talking about the nature of Atma - the nature of the SELF in oneself. Continuing, भगवान् says:

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं, य एनं अजं अव्ययं । कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ, कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥	2 - 21
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पार्थ - O! Arjuna,

यः एनं (आत्मानं) वेद - The one who understands and appreciates the true nature of oneself as आत्मा, and the nature of आत्मा as:

अविनाशिनं - That which is not subject to destruction,

नित्यं - That which is ever-existent-eternal,

अजं - That which is not born - That which is is immortal,

अव्ययं - That which is not subject to any kind of change;



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सः - That person - the one recognizes oneself as आत्मा as described above, that person  
- an आत्म ज्ञानी

कथं हन्ति, कथं घातयति - how does he kill or how does he cause anyone to kill; again,  
कं हन्ति, कं घातयति - whom does he kill, or whom does he cause to kill.

As we may recall, in terms of कठोपनिषत्, the हनन क्रिया - the action of killing - is just an illustration here for any action.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says "How can an आत्म ज्ञानी do any action, or cause anyone to do any action, meaning thereby, he neither acts nor causes any one to act; he is neither a कर्ता - doer of any कर्म - nor does he seek to do any कर्म". In other words an आत्म ज्ञानी is really a सर्व कर्म सन्यासी - he is a renunciate of all actions.

Saying that, as we may recall, Sri Krishna also advised Arjuna in the earlier verse तस्मात् युध्यस्व - "Therefore, Arjuna, carry on with this war, and fight, as you must".

Now, "If I am to be, neither a कर्ता - a doer of an action - nor should I seek to do any कर्म", if I am in fact to be a सर्व कर्म सन्यासी then why does Krishna ask me to carry on this fight? There is obviously some contradiction in Sri Krishna's words" - so thinks Arjuna, and he does not hesitate to call attention to this contradiction, for the benefit of humanity. He says:

" व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन, बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे "  
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य, येन श्रेयः अहं आप्नुयाम् ॥

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Krishna, by your contradicting words, it seems as if you are deliberately causing confusion to my बुद्धि; please tell me with certainty the one Means by which I can gain श्रेयस्. That is how the 3rd chapter of भगवत् गीता begins.

Since we still have a long way to go, before we enter into the 3rd chapter, let us now make a special effort to understand why, and what exactly, Sri Krishna has been talking about, in all the above verses, especially with reference to आत्मा. Let us briefly recall the context, as it is right now.

Arjuna says "To fight, I am not happy; to run away from the battlefield, I am not happy either. My mind is confused as to what to do. . What should I do to be happy?" That is essentially Arjuna's question.



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Sri Krishna replies "To be happy, to gain happiness is not a matter of simply doing something, or not doing something; it is essentially a matter of Being something".

The difference between Being and Doing and the relationship between the two must be clearly understood. If you want to be happy, you must know the Source of your Happiness. Your Source of Happiness is Yourself - your true Self. Therefore, if you want to be happy, you must know yourself, and you must be yourself - Your true Self - That is all.

That means - what? That means, you have to learn to appreciate the true nature of yourself, and then you have to learn to realize your true nature in yourself by yourself. That is why I am trying to educate you, through different words, the true nature of yourself, and what you need to do to realize your true nature, in your own self, by your own self.

Your true nature is, what Vedanta calls आत्मा. That आत्मा is सर्वान्तर आत्मा. It is all-pervading आत्मा, which by its very nature is

नित्यः - Ever existent, eternal

अविनाशि - indestructible

अप्रमेयः - It cannot be comprehended by your mind and sense organs as an object, because, It is,

अचिक्रिय आत्मा - It does not do, nor cause any one to do, any action. That is the Nature of Atma - You are! If you realize That आत्मा in yourself, by yourself, you will discover yourself not only as the source of your happiness, you will discover yourself as All-Happiness Itself.

You will not only gain happiness, you will be Happiness as well. That Happiness is the ONE you are really seeking. Now, what should one do in order to realize That happiness in oneself? As the कैवल्य उपनिषत् points out:

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन

त्यागेन एके अमृतत्वं आनशुः ।

No action can give you That Happiness. No other person can give you That happiness, nor can you buy That Happiness by any kind of wealth. All happiness, derived from actions, people and wealth, can only be of a transient nature. One need not have to go after them; they come and go in everybody's life naturally.



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On the other hand, अमृतत्वं - The Immortal Happiness - the ONLY Happiness that is worth seeking - The Happiness that you are seeking right now, whether you know it or not - That Immortal Happiness - That realization of your true nature as सत् स्वरूपं, चित् स्वरूपं, आनन्द स्वरूपं - The realization of your own eternal nature, all-conscious nature, all-happiness nature, can be accomplished only through, as the Upanishad says

त्यागेन एके आनशु : - only through त्याग बुद्धि, सर्व कर्म सन्यास बुद्धि - which means renunciation of all actions.

Now, what is त्याग or सर्व कर्म सन्यास? Does it mean "Stop doing all actions"? No, says the Vedanta. You cannot stop doing actions, even if you want to. Never is there any moment when you are not doing some कर्म - some action or other. Then, how can one be a त्यागी or सर्व कर्म सन्यासी ?

त्याग or सर्व कर्म सन्यास does not mean not doing actions; it means, not being attached to the actions; it means not being attached to the actions or their results. That is possible only for a ज्ञानी, the one who is always in union with आत्म ज्ञानं - SELF-Knowledge - ईश्वर ज्ञानं - God consciousness.

As our Upanishad says:

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः - enjoy doing what has been left for you to do by ईश्वर. Do all actions as ईश्वर आराधन - as Worship of the Lord, and receive the results of your actions as ईश्वर प्रसाद - as the very Grace of the Lord. That is त्याग. That means, as the Gita says a little later, नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं - Do whatever comes to you as your duty, in terms of धर्म, at this time and place, with absolutely no attachment whatsoever, either for the action or its results.

You do the action simply because, it needs to be done, and it has been left for you to do by ईश्वर. That is कर्म योग, कर्म फल त्याग. In your case, that is also सर्व कर्म सन्यास.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि - Fix your mind in the Glory of the Lord, and do all your actions. That is ध्यान योग.

With ईश्वर अर्पित बुद्धि - with your बुद्धि focused on the Lord, do all your actions as यज्ञ - as dedication to the Lord - That is भक्ति योग.



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Doing your कर्म as कर्म योग, ध्यान योग and भक्ति योग you ultimately gain the maturity of a ज्ञानी - the wise person. A wise man is enthusiastically engaged in actions all the time, for the welfare of everybody - family, community and the world at large - and that is precisely what is left for him to do by ईश्वर. While being so engaged in actions, he is also absolutely free from any notion of doer-ship. That is ज्ञान योग - That is त्याग - That is सर्व कर्म सन्यास.

When one is in the state of ज्ञान योग, one is untouched by actions or their results; one is totally in union with परमेश्वर in a state of perennial Happiness; in That state, one is the very embodiment of Actionlessness. Arjuna! That State of Existence is your Destination.

Go ahead and do whatever is your duty to do, with the attitude of कर्म योग, ध्यान योग and भक्ति योग.

सर्व धर्मान् परित्यज्य, मां एकं शरणं व्रज ।  
अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

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Give up all bondages with कर्म and कर्म फल, and set your mind on परमेश्वर. I will take care of you and uplift you from all obstacles in your endeavor to reach your Destination". That is Sri Krishna's answer to Arjuna; and That is also Sri Krishna's answer to all our prayers.

All that we have talked about today, is explained in detail by Sri Krishna in the next 16 chapters of the भगवत् गीता. However, at this point, it is important to know that the first step in the process of Self-Realization is to have a clear and firm understanding of what is to be realized, namely, the true nature of one's own self, called in Vedanta as the Atma.

As we have already seen, through a variety of word-pointers, Sri Krishna has described आत्मा as नित्यः अव्ययः, अविनाशि, अप्रमेयः अचिक्रियः, etc. Atma is eternal, not subject to any change, indestructible, incomprehensible as an object, Atma neither acts nor can be acted upon, etc. Now, to start with, these word pointers are no more than words, which seem to unfold more our ignorance about ourselves, than our knowledge about ourselves.

That is naturally so, because it is only at maturity in our spiritual progress, through कर्म योग, ध्यान योग, भक्ति योग and ज्ञान योग, the reverse process can take place, namely the unfolding of knowledge and elimination of ignorance about the true nature of



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ourselves. Nevertheless, a clarity of vision as to the nature and scope of the knowledge to be realized, is a necessary prerequisite even for a meaningful entry into a life of कर्म योग. It is for this reason that Sri Krishna repeats again and again about the Nature of Atma, Jiva (the individual) and the relationship between the two.

Continuing this Discourse, भगवान् says:

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय, नवानि गृह्णाति नरोपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि, अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

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Here देही means the जीव - the individual person, who is made up of the perceptible gross physical body, the imperceptible subtle causal bodies, together with आत्मा. The verse says:

Just as a जीव - an individual person gives up worn out or old clothing and takes up new ones, similarly, the same जीव, on giving up the worn out or old gross physical body, naturally takes up an appropriate new gross physical body. By giving up the old clothes and putting on new ones, the person does not change. Similarly, by giving up the old body and assuming a new one, the आत्मा in the जीव - the individual person - does not change.

The verse also tells something more about every जीव - every individual person. By virtue of one's own कर्म, the जीव already becomes ready to assume a new body, prior to casting out the old worn-out body which has served its purpose.

In other words, the mental make-up of a person does not die along with the death of the gross body. The mental make-up of the person, along with its कर्म-born tendencies and dispositions is called the subtle-body (सूक्ष्म शरीर) which is the core of every जीव; and it survives the death of the physical frame. In its next step of evolution, the जीव assumes a new physical frame more suited to the fulfillment of its natural tendencies and dispositions. In all these changes, the Atma remains unchanged. Further,

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि, नैनं दहति पावकः ।  
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो, न शोषयति मारुतः ॥

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एनं अत्मानं शस्त्राणि न छिन्दन्ति - Weapons, do not and cannot, cleave That आत्मा, because Atma has no body; for the same reason,



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एनं अत्मानं पावकः न दहति - The fire cannot and does not burn Atma

एनं अत्मानं आपः न क्लेदयन्ति - The water does not , and cannot wet or drown That  
आत्मा

एनं अत्मानं मारुतः न शोषयति - The air dos not, and cannot dry That Atma

Weapons cannot destroy Atma, fire cannot burn Atma, water cannot wet or drown Atma and air cannot dry Atma; which means none of these things - weapon, fire, water, air, etc. can bring about any change in Atma; thus Atma is not the object of an action. That does not mean आत्मा is non-existent.

अच्छेद्योऽयं अदाह्योऽयं, अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुः, अचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥

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आत्मा IS अयं अपरोक्ष आत्मा - The existence of आत्मा is a matter of immediate knowledge; the existence of आत्मा - The "I" - is self-evident. The true nature of That Self-evident "I: is

अच्छेद्यः - not subject to destruction by any weapon

अदाह्यः - not subject to be burnt by fire

अक्लेद्यः - not subject to getting wet or drowning by water

अशोष्यः - not subject to get dried by air

This repetition of the previous verse is only to emphasize the fact that Atma is not शून्यः - zero; It is an Existent Being, and It is

नित्यः - Eternal

सर्वगतः - all-pervasive, in and out of entire creation; and, because It is all-pervasive, It is स्थाणुः : - stable as a pillar

अचलः - unmoving and immovable and

सनातनः - ever existent and ever new. It is ever new because the Glories of Atma are infinite, and no matter how much you explore, the scope for discovery is limitless. Further,

अव्यक्तोऽयं अचिन्त्योऽयं, अचिकार्योऽयं उच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं, नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥

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अयं आत्मा - That Atma



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अव्यक्तः - It is unmanifest; It is not available as an object for the sense organs to perceive, because It is अप्रमेयः - not available as an object for any means of knowledge. As we will see in Kenopanishad,

न तत्र चक्षुर गच्छति, न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः - The eyes are incapable of reaching Atma, the organ of speech cannot go there, and the mind cannot go there either. Further, indicating That ever-existent Atma, the Kenopanishad says also:

यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं That which is not revealed by words as their meaning,

येन वाग् अभ्युध्यते - but That by which words reveal their meaning, both to the speaker and to the listener;

यत् मनसा न मनुते, येन आहुः मनो मतं - That which is not known by the mind, but That by which, the mind is capable of knowing;

यत् चक्षुषा न पश्यति, येन चक्षुंसि पश्यति - That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but That by which eyes are capable of seeing;

यत् श्रोत्रेण न श्रुणोति, येन श्रोत्रं इदं श्रुतं - That which is not heard by the ear as a sound, but That by which the ear is able to hear the sound,

यत् प्राणेन न प्राणिति, येन प्राणः प्रणीयते - That which is not sustained by प्राण (the vital air), but That by which प्राण is sustained,

तत् एव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि - Such is the nature of That ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा - the "I" in yourself. It is That आत्मा that you need to realize by yourself, so says The Kenopanishad. Sri Krishna gives the same message.

अचिन्त्योऽयं - Atma is not available as an object of thought , object of comprehension;

अविकार्योऽयं - Atma is not available as an object to be acted upon and changed into something else; Atma is विकार रहितः free from any change. Atma, by Itself, does not change, and It is not available for change, by any means either.

तस्मात् - Therefore,

एनं आत्मानं एवं विदित्वा, न अनुशोचितुं अर्हसि - Appreciating the Nature of Atma in this manner, as it is, there is nothing for you to entertain any grief - any sorrow.

It does not befit you, to entertain any कर्तृत्व बुद्धि - the notion that "I am the कर्ता of a कर्म - I am the doer of an action".

Get rid of that notion, and DO whatever has come to you as your duty at this time and place; you will then have no sorrow. There is no need to entertain sorrow in following धर्म - and doing one's duty. So says Sri Krishna. We will continue next time.